

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

RICHARD J. OGLESBY,

GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS,

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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JANUARY 16, 1865.

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SPRINGFIELD:

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## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

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*Fellow-citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives :*

The period has arrived, fixed by our constitution, for a change in the administration of the executive affairs of the State, by the election of another Governor for four years. This distinguished honor, by the generous confidence of the electors of the State, has been conferred upon the humble person who now addresses you. The oath required by the constitution has been administered to me, and I at once enter upon the performance of the high duties pertaining to the office. None can realize more sensibly than myself the magnitude of these new responsibilities, and the ability required for the faithful execution of them. None can feel more sensibly than myself, the limited qualifications I bring to the discharge of these duties, and that want of experience which in some degree might atone for the lack of other qualities. Of one thing, however, gentlemen, I can assure you, and those you have the honor to represent : I bring with me an unflinching determination to discharge these duties to the best of my ability—with an equally determined purpose of faithfulness and integrity to the State and the people, under all circumstances, to the end of my service.

While the recent canvass in our National and State elections was marked by some bitterness, resulting in part from the unfortunate condition of the country, thrust upon us by the efforts of the enemy in arms against it, striving by actual and forcible rebellion to divide and destroy the National Union and entail upon our people perpetual misery, sorrow and dishonor, in part from the recurrence of the Presidential election, which always brings with it

what seems inseparable from our form of government, party organizations and political hostility to the administration in power, it is with much satisfaction I admit it, and very creditable to our opponents, that the expression of the people, by which they have again chosen their servants for another term of office, seems to be accepted with a becoming and respectful acquiescence. So marked, indeed, has been the expression of the popular will, I do not fail to recognize in it the absence of a mere party triumph. Conscious of the ruin threatened upon our country—determined to thwart the purposes of all who had at heart the overthrow and destruction of the government, there was a spontaneous and sublime resolve of the people, rising above all partisan attachment to rush to the standard of the country, and by an outspoken and triumphant vindication of our cause and the administration in power, convince the rebels in arms and demonstrate to the world that we are united in our holy purpose to rescue our nation from the jaws of death, and put to silence the persistent avowals of all those who continually asserted, in every form by which men can give expression to their feelings, that the war had been prosecuted, on our part, by the President, unwisely, for selfish, unlawful and unholy purposes.

I do not disguise the fact, nor do I desire to do so, that I have been chosen to this high position by the Union people of the State, without regard to party, and am expected by them to administer its executive affairs, with a view to no partisan or selfish purposes, and thus relieved of many of the burdens which usually attend a mere party triumph, am left free with you, to follow the path of duty pointed out so clearly that I hope to be able to adhere to it.

In addition to the large number of troops of every branch of the service, including infantry, cavalry, artillery, and engineers, voluntarily furnished by the State, in the last three and a half years, to carry on the war, could anything further have been required of us to have shown to the General Government our original, persistent and unalterable purpose to contribute every energy of the State and the cordial, hearty and soul-determined will of the people to maintain the integrity of the Union, and assist in extirpating from the soil of the republic the last vestige of treason, the recent matured and deliberate expression of an overwhelming majority of the people of the State, at the ballot-box upon the well defined issues of the contest, reassures the nation and the civilized world

that the State of Illinois, true to her instincts of loyalty and constitutional liberty, will remain faithful to her allegiance, true to the Union, an humble participant in the proud history and pure glory of the holy sisterhood of States, sharing their experience and abiding their fortune to the end of time. We say, the republic shall not die, the Union shall not be divided, the rebellion shall not prevail, traitors shall not conquer patriots pledged to the maintenance of these noble and dignified issues, believing their defense essential to the complete enjoyment of all the blessings promised us in the constitution and laws of our country—with an entire consciousness of the exacting sacrifices imperiously demanded to support and uphold them—with our eyes upon, and hearts full of devotion to the flag of our country, we declare before the world that the rebellion and human slavery shall fall and perish together.

But gentlemen, while we voluntarily accept these national obligations, and cheerfully admit their binding force, we are also required to guard with special care the local interests of the State, and to contribute our best energies in developing its resources. I am thankful that this duty falls chiefly upon the legislative branch of the government. To you the people will look for the enactment of such laws as will be required to meet the present condition of the country. Voluntarily chosen from all the pursuits of life—conversant with the various interests of the whole community—in intimate relation with your constituents, and fully sharing their confidence—I shall be happy at all times to co-operate with you in every effort to protect the honor, maintain the credit, and promote the general prosperity of the State.

The biennial message of my predecessor is before you. I invite your attention again to the full and careful statements it contains in reference to the present condition of the government. A faithful service of four years, the most interesting and embarrassing since the organization of the State government, has amply qualified him to study carefully the various interests of the State, and lends a dignity to his statements and recommendations, not to be accorded to those of one less experienced in the affairs of the State. The result of his arduous labors is felt in every part of the State, and everywhere there will greet him, as he retires from the distinguished office he so ably administered, the plaudits of his generous countrymen, "well done thou good and faithful servant."



It is a gratifying reflection that, since the commencement of the war, our State has been faithful to all her obligations to the National Government. No call has been made upon her that has not been promptly and fully answered. When it was the custom to fill the quotas of the State by volunteering, she exceeded all calls upon her by many thousands. And although there was some difference of views, as to the credits to which the State was entitled, she nevertheless proceeded to fill the quota settled upon her under the apportionment made by the Provost Marshal General, when the attempt was made last year, to raise the required number of men by drafting, and although, for a time, serious apprehensions were felt that stubborn resistance would be made against the efforts of the regularly appointed officers of the law to enforce the draft, time and reflection sufficiently demonstrated to those who may have contemplated the folly of this appeal to force, that there was no reliable or respectable portion of the community to be found to sustain this discreditable and dishonorable feeling. The law has been faithfully executed in every part of the State.

I think I may with all truthfulness say, in communicating to you the state of the government, that at no time, in the history of the State has Illinois been in a better condition, in reference to all the great interests of the people.

The cultivation of the soil is the great source of all our happiness. Manufactures and commerce have no substantial basis except in the prosperity of agriculture; when this fails or is neglected, all fail with it, and the whole enterprise of the State flags and desponds. To this great interest we must constantly recur, as the only certain means of reliance in every condition of life. We are a State of farmers, and since this is the great foundation of all our wealth and prosperity, furnishing the support of the State and the sinews of war, giving energy and animation to all the relations of life, and employment to far the largest portion of the population of our State, will it not be wise to encourage, by liberal appropriations, whatever fosters or tends to advance it?

Whilst I would urge the strictest economy in every department, and by all the agents of the State government, and a watchful care over all the resources to which we are to look for a speedy and certain extinguishment of the public debt, I would, by no means,



be understood as advising such a policy, in regard to the great industrial pursuits of the State, as would be calculated to hinder or delay their full development.

The subject of education has so long and so uniformly received the attention, encouragement and support of the Legislature—the public mind is so thoroughly wedded to our system of public instruction—I feel called upon to do little more than refer to it as one of the general subjects for your deliberation. Our statutes contain so many acts for the amendment of the school law, adding to and amplifying the system, as experience points out its defects, and thus adapting it, year after year, to the condition of our youth, we may hope, in time, the system will approximate to something like perfection. The report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will, in a short time, be laid before you. I invite your careful attention to it.

By the act of July 2d, A. D. 1862, Congress donated to this State, in common with other States and Territories of the Union, which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and mechanic arts, land, or its equivalent in scrip, to the amount of thirty thousand acres, for each senator and representative in Congress from any State or Territory, amounting, for this State, to four hundred and eighty thousand acres. By the act of February 14th, 1863, our Legislature accepted the donation, and provided for informing the Secretary of the Interior of the fact. It will become necessary to make some disposition of this grant, under the conditions and limitations fixed by the act of Congress. The subject is eliciting some interest amongst the friends of agriculture, the mechanic arts and industrial education in different parts of the State. If the interest arising from the fund shall be judiciously applied to the purposes contemplated by the act of Congress, both agriculture and the mechanic arts will receive incalculable benefit from the grant. You are fresh from the people, and doubtless understand the best manner of disposing of this subject, to meet their wishes, and accomplish the real design of the General Government in making the gift. I only desire to call your attention to it.

Our public institutions at Jacksonville, for the protection, improvement and education of the insane, the deaf and dumb, and the blind, are in excellent condition, realizing all that has ever

been expected of them, contributing to the wants and comfort of these distressed children of misfortune, who continually claim the fostering care of the State, and appeal to the noblest instincts of our nature for encouragement and support. I recommend such appropriations as shall be necessary to continue their usefulness to the State.

It is made the duty of the Governor to see that the laws of the State be faithfully executed. Ordinarily, this can be no great task; but in turbulent times, when the authorities of the nation are openly defied and resisted, and the peace of the people is threatened by armed bodies of men, in actual rebellion, it becomes a serious responsibility. Happily for us, our State, thus far, has escaped the ravages and desolation of the war raging on our borders. There have been a few attempts, however, in the last year, by two or three gangs of outlaws, to disturb the quiet of our people and involve the State in civil war. Their field of operations seems to have been confined to a few counties in the center of the State. Their time was spent in pillaging and murdering unprotected persons and inflicting all manner of annoyance upon the peaceable inhabitants of those counties. Some of them claimed to be emissaries from the rebel States, sent into Illinois to raise recruits for the rebel army. As they were of the very lowest order of human existence, it is very likely true they were engaged in this infamous project. Another attempt was made, upon the eve of the election in November last, by a gang of desperate men, to release the prisoners of war at Camp Douglas, fire the city of Chicago, by force take possession of the polls, and inaugurate revolution in the north part of the State. By the timely and prudent interference of the commanding officer at Camp Douglas, Col. B. J. Sweet, zealously supported by his command, and the earnest co-operation of the police of the city of Chicago, the chief men engaged in the plot, with many miserable dupes following their vicious instigations, were arrested and confined, the scheme defeated, and the city and State saved from the terrors of this dark plot. To meet emergencies like these, and to be ready, at any moment, to resist the efforts of evil-disposed persons against the State, it may be prudent to have such a force at the disposal of the State, as will enable the officers of the law, faithfully to execute their duties in any part of the State, and, if serious resistance be made to the law, to crush it at once, and bring the offenders to speedy and exemplary justice.

The very slightest attempt at insurrection, in our State, should be met by the firm and united efforts of the people to annihilate it. So confident am I of the support of the peace-loving and law-abiding citizens of the State, and so firmly do I rely upon their determination to sustain the rights of the State and its high character, against the machinations of all evil-disposed persons, we may venture to hope we shall pass safely through the perils that still seriously threaten the country. Every attempt at insurrection in the State, or invasion of our territory by an armed force, would involve a crime against the National Government, and would, in time, be met and resisted by the forces of the United States.

It is the deliberate purpose of the National Government, to maintain peace and good order throughout the whole country, to subdue the spirit of resistance to and violation of the constitution, and laws of the country, whether it is dignified by the name of revolution, or seeks its covert designs in rebellion.

Our militia law seems to possess little life, and is, manifestly, unsuited to the condition of the country. I recommend a thorough revision of the whole act. Our constitution contemplates the organization of the militia, and has made every male resident of the State, negroes, mulattoes and Indians excepted, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years, subject to militia duty, and directs that it shall be armed, equipped and trained, as the General Assembly may provide by law. Some important amendments were made to the law, at the special session of the Legislature, in 1861, but these were promptly repealed, in 1863, by the Legislature, then in session.

In my opinion, a law which would provide for arming, equipping and training the militia, in time of peace, would not be acceptable to the people, and would hardly be executed. The subject is not free from embarrassments, and will require much time and patient deliberation, to adapt it to the requirements of the present unsettled state of the country. It is a power which should be resorted to only in extreme cases, and when the ordinary means for the administration of the laws fail, are purposely avoided, or disregarded. When, however, the State is invaded, or threatened with invasion, insurrection or rebellion, by an open and avowed enemy, or a secret and hidden foe, bent on the destruction of the government or the peace and happiness of the people, that law will have but little

virtue in it which does not provide for such an effective organization of the militia as will put it at the disposal of the officers of the government, or such active or volunteer portions of it, as may be necessary, by the prudent use of it, to promptly and effectually restore good order and the faithful execution of the laws. I do not believe any system can be effective which does not provide that a portion of the militia shall have such an organization as will make it reliable and effective when called out. It must be armed, equipped and disciplined—partially, at least—or it can be of no service to the State. In any view you may take of the subject, we cannot lose sight of the fact that Congress, under the Constitution of the United States, possesses full power to provide for organizing, arming and disciplining the militia, and of calling it forth to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrection and repel invasion, and has already judiciously exercised this power, under the act for enrolling and calling out the National forces, and for other purposes, approved March 3d, 1863.

If you shall consider that the condition of the country requires a repeal, or modification of the present State law, and the adoption of a new and efficient organization of the militia, the necessary expenses to carry it into execution, must be provided by appropriations from the treasury.

The constitution of the State provides, article 6, section 1: "In all elections every white male citizen, above the age of twenty-one years, having resided in the State one year next preceding any election, shall be entitled to vote at such election; and every white male inhabitant, of the age aforesaid, who may be a resident of the State at the time of the adoption of this constitution, shall have the right of voting, as aforesaid; but no such citizen or inhabitant shall be entitled to vote except in the district or county in which he shall actually reside at the time of such election." Section 5th, further provides: "No elector shall be deemed to have lost his residence in this State, by reason of his absence on the business of the United States or of this State." Under these provisions of the constitution, it has been contended, by some, that the General Assembly has no power to provide, by law, for taking the votes of our soldiers in the field. Thus, during the progress of this rebellion against the government of the United States, and the rights, privileges and immunities of the citizens of this State, for a period of now nearly four years, the noble and gallant men of Illinois who

have gone forth, voluntarily, on the business of the United States and of this State, to suppress that rebellion and to restore to the citizens of this State their just rights under the constitution and laws of the United States, have been substantially expatriated, because of the want of a law of our Legislature providing them with the means of voting. We say to those brave citizens of our State, give up your pursuits of life, your business occupations, the comforts of home, the endearments of family, the delights of a life of peace, put on the uniform of the soldier, the armor of war, and go forth to fight the battles of our country, perpetuate its blessings, and secure to us the exalted privileges of the elective franchise—but you are not to vote. Burden yourselves with the rifle and knapsack, toil through the heat and cold, the perplexities and exposures of a long campaign, lie down upon the untented field and subsist upon the rudest fare through the days and nights of a long service, dream of home and that country you love so well—but you cannot vote. Finally, plunge into the fight against the desperate enemies of our country, uphold the flag of freedom in the dread hour of fearful battle, rush on to death with a willing heart, pour out your blood freely and die nobly for that country whose constitution is construed to say—you shall not vote. I do not so understand it.

It is agreed that a soldier, with the proper qualifications and residence in the State, absent in the war, may return on the day of election and vote, and thanks to the generous efforts of the administration, many thousands were permitted to return home and do so in the late elections. Besides the great expense attending this method of allowing the soldiers to vote, it is attended with very great inconvenience to the service, and can not always be done, as it might be utterly out of the question to withdraw a portion of our forces from the enemy's country, and there will be no time when all the regiments can be spared from the front to return home to attend an election. It would seem to be unjust to extend this privilege to a portion of them and exclude others, and would subject the government to unpleasant and unjust criticism to do so, however pure the purpose might be to do justice to the service and the soldier, by allowing such of them to return as might for that purpose receive furloughs and leave of absence.

It will be admitted, that our constitution was formed at a time when it was not possible to foresee or apprehend the present con-



dition of affairs in the country. The design and spirit of the constitution, if it may be understood to reflect the sentiments of the people, was clearly to guarantee to every citizen, with the proper qualifications the unfettered right of voting at every election in the State. There was, there is no design to abridge, in any respect, this first and highest privilege of every citizen. It cannot be fairly argued that in fixing limitations upon the right of suffrage, it was ever the design of the framers of the constitution to disfranchise any portion of the citizens of the State, except as it is provided that the General Assembly may pass laws to exclude from this right persons convicted of infamous crimes. Shall it be insisted then that because the State was forced into a condition to solicit more than one hundred thousand of its legal voters to leave their counties and districts, and go across the border into a rebellious territory, to secure the fundamental rights of the State and the preservation of the Union, these voters, who were required to be absent most of them three years, and who are now absent on this business of the United States, and of this State, are to forfeit their rights of citizenship—to be deprived of giving an expression to their feelings upon matters pertaining to State or National affairs. Are they to be met with the argument that because they have been willing to go out of the State to serve it, that the constitution inflicts upon them a punishment for their service, and for what the State requested and urged them to do?

It seems clear to my mind that a fair and liberal construction of the constitution will relieve us from this unpleasant conclusion. I hope I do the whole country justice, in asserting that there is a disposition to protect the rights of the soldiers in this respect, if an interpretation may be given to the constitution which will authorize the Legislature to pass a law, that will permit soldiers in the field to give their votes there, and have them sent to their respective places of residence in the State, deposited in the ballot box, on the day of election, and canvassed as other votes are when deposited by citizens residing in the district, attending to their own private affairs.

The mode of voting is by ballot, the time fixed for general elections is the Tuesday next after the first Monday of November, biennially, until otherwise provided by law; and "the place is in the district or county in which the voter shall actually reside at the



time of such election." Shall the strict letter of the law here prevail to the extent of requiring the soldier who is a legal voter to be positively present at the polls in person to deposit his ballot with his own hand, or shall the other equally reasonable construction be accepted, that if the honest and legal voter, absent in the war shall by his agent or the person or means to be provided by law, on the day of election, present his ballot in his district, or county, at the place of voting, to be deposited for him in the ballot box, be considered a compliance with the constitution? The laws of the State attempt to define residence, and do prescribe the manner in which the ballot shall be given, numbered and counted, and the name of the voter written down; but these laws are under the control of the Legislature, and subject to any amendments you may in your wisdom see fit to make.

The whole question is before you, except so far as restrictions are placed upon your action by the constitution. The soldier is admitted to be a citizen; is admitted to retain his residence in the district or county where he resided when he entered the service, or where he has fixed it since doing so. He retains every qualification he had when he became a soldier, and may exercise every right he ever did as a citizen, except the essential one of voting, unless he actually returns in person, and with his own hand deposits his ballot in the ballot-box. The constitution requires no such strict condition of voting. It does not require the voter to be present to vote, nor does it require his name to be registered, nor the ballot numbered; nor does it say how it shall be deposited or handed in. The voter is required to vote by ballot; unless he vote by ballot, he cannot vote at all; but he is not restricted from making out his ballot when and where he chooses. He may make it out fifty days before election, in the field, or on the march, or anywhere else; and, so far as language goes, the purposes of the constitution are as fully answered by another depositing that ballot, as if deposited by the voter personally present on the spot, on the day of election. The ballot contains his vote; wherever that is put in the ballot-box, there the vote is given. The voter is undeniably required to deposit his ballot in the district or county in which he resides, because it contains his vote; and he is not entitled to have it counted in any other place. If he were required to vote *viva voce*, it would be

different; his presence would then be necessary; but as he is required to vote by ballot, his presence at the ballot-box or place of voting is not necessary to the act of voting.

It will be observed that the language of the constitution is general—"all elections." As there is no exception, elections of officers of the militia must be included in the general requirements as to residence; and yet, the Legislature, at the special session in April, 1861, passed a law for the organization of six regiments of infantry, at Camp Yates, in Sangamon county, and fixed the place of voting at the head-quarters of each company. These regiments were composed of men from all parts of the State, who voted for the most important offices in Sangamon county, with a residence, in many instances, of not exceeding twenty-four hours, and in few cases, of ten days. The law provided for returning and canvassing the votes, and issuing commissions to the officers elected, some of whom were of the rank of colonel. It further provided for the election of a brigadier general, and one was elected at the head-quarters of the colonels of the six regiments. Again, on the 29th of April, at the same special session, another law was passed, ratifying and confirming the elections on the 25th of April, held under the first law. These elections were held at places where, notoriously, the soldiers did not reside; in a county where many had never been before, and never had any thought of residing. The votes were given by ballot, and every form of an election observed throughout; and yet, I believe, the constitutionality of these elections has never been questioned.

So far, I have considered the question with reference to all elections in the State. Upon the question of your power to pass a law to enable our soldiers to vote for electors of President and Vice-President, and members of Congress, there can be no doubt. The constitution of the State places no restriction upon your action. The whole subject is disposed of by the constitution of the United States, article second, section first: "Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the *Legislature* thereof may direct, a number of electors equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the State may be entitled in Congress." Again, article first, section four: "The times, places and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives shall be prescribed in each State by the *legislation thereof*; but the Congress

may, at any time, by law, make or alter such regulation, except as to the places for choosing senators."

The General Assembly may, therefore, prescribe the times, places, and manner of electing representatives, and the manner of appointing electors in this State. The manner in which the voter in the field may make his ballot, and the means by which he may send it to his district or county, to be deposited in or delivered at the polls on the day of election, can be provided by law, without difficulty.

A stringent law to prohibit fraud by or upon the voter—securing the rights of the voter, while protecting the purity of the ballot-box—would show to our soldiers, that their political rights are tenderly regarded by their fellow-countrymen at home, while they are absent defending our cause in the war. I therefore earnestly recommend the passage of a law securing to every soldier in the field, who would, if at home on the day of election, be a legal voter, the privilege of giving his vote in the field, and having it sent to his district or county, to be deposited and counted as other votes are, during his necessary absence in the war.

There is every encouragement to hope that the war is rapidly drawing to a close. There may, after all, be no occasion for putting such a law into practical effect. To guard, however, against all contingencies, and that we may be faithful to him who is so devoted to us, the law should receive your early attention.

The vast multitude of helpless orphans left upon our hands, deprived of the kind protection of fathers, who have given their lives to the country, appeal to us for aid and protection. We owe something more to this dependent portion of our community than to the distressed generally, because patriotism and devotion to the country have been instrumental in bringing them to this condition. They are the children of the State; and I am sure I give expression to the generous sympathy of our whole people, when I assure you it will afford me pleasure to aid you in any legislation you may see fit to enact, by which these worthy sufferers may be benefited, educated and provided for.

Since the commencement of this rebellion, the spirit of our people has been exhibited, in the organization and operation of the various National, State, and auxiliary Sanitary Societies, and the United States Christian Commission. These benevolent associa-

tions have added a new feature to modern warfare, and go very far towards mitigating its barbarities. They exist by virtue of no law—are independent of all political influence—are the outgrowth of the heart's warm love for the toiling and suffering—the sick and wounded soldiers of the republic. Here, the tender affection and warm sympathy of our women of America, are manifested in a thousand different forms. The aged mother, modest sister, and devoted wife, are touched alike by the sufferings of those dear to them, and from the remote and obscure corners, as well as from the more populous parts of the State comes relief in every variety and with no stinted liberality. Donations are made, money given, labor contributed, ingenuity is at work in every appliance of art to give life and energy to the great object of accumulating supplies for the use of our suffering soldiers. It is just to say, Illinois has not been behind her sister States in this great benevolent work.

I submit to you, gentlemen, if it is not better to permit this great agency of the people, the work of their own thoughts, to be left entirely to their management, operation and control, free from all legislative interference. It is greatly to be feared, that any attempt to give to it the appearance of an institution supported by law, will divest it of its real character, and in a very short time discourage those voluntary and unselfish efforts of the public to support and sustain it, without which it would soon languish and its efficiency become impaired. I will cheerfully co-operate with you in any appropriations you may be willing to make, having in view aid and supplies to be furnished for the relief and support of those deserving patriots.

The National Government has liberally provided for all its soldiers. No nation on earth has done more to relieve the hardships of the soldier, still it is impossible to attend to all his reasonable wants, to look after and provide fully for his comfort. When he is sent to the hospital, separated from his company, detached on special duty, or relieved on furlough, it often occurs that he is neglected or partially forgotten by his officers, who are occupied with other duties in looking after and taking care of the men present with them. But the State owes something to these worthy citizens, notwithstanding they have become soldiers in the service of the United States, and so far as we can do so without interfering with

the authority of the United States, we should make every reasonable effort to take care of them. I know of no way in which this may be so effectually done as by appointing State military agents, to be paid by the State, whose duties shall be prescribed by law, to be under the control of, and report to, the Adjutant General of the State. Stationed at different important military points where our soldiers are on duty, they could render valuable services to the State and the soldier, in looking after the sick and wounded—in promptly securing discharges when manifestly necessary—arranging and supplying pay and descriptive rolls—drawing clothing and keeping the soldier advised of the places where his company may be found—in writing home, and sending his pay home for him, when desired to do so. I recommend the passage of a law to secure these desirable objects.

However much the desolations of war are to be lamented, inflicting, as it continually does, the severest calamities upon our country, entailing misery and misfortune upon every interest of morality and humanity, covering the whole land with mourning and distress, breaking up and destroying the dearest relations of life, threatening, in its mad career, the total overthrow and annihilation of the government—madly tearing to pieces the noblest erections of human genius and intellect—still we have war, have it in our very midst, on our hands, and must have it until, by the fearful agencies it uses, we utterly and forever subdue and crush out the rebellious and intolerant spirit which, in the hearts of bad men, put it on foot, and gave it loose reins in our once happy land. We are abundantly able to prosecute this war, on our part waged purely and entirely in self defense, to support and maintain the National Union, under the constitution, for an indefinite number of years—long enough, at least, to restore the Union and break up and destroy all combinations against it, for whatever purpose. If we do not do so, with the wisdom, experience and wealth we possess, and the bountiful means the God of the Universe has benignly placed in our hands, with the inborn love of liberty and freedom of every inhabitant covered and protected by our flag, then it will, at last, be written down upon the stern record of history, that a Democratic government is a failure, and the people have neither sense nor courage enough to rule themselves.

It will not be possible to suffer a division of the Union, and then attempt to patch up what is left, and try to deceive ourselves and



mankind by calling it a government. It will be a cheat, a bubble, a failure, an ever present fabric of folly, to persecute us and mortify the down trodden of the world; ready to topple over and fall to pieces at the slightest attempt against it by the weakest government; characterless, with broken pride, we will spend the residue of life in bewailing our sordid and unmanly nature, and the mean abandonment of the bountiful means we possessed to have saved it, but did not. Jeered and derided by every upstart—the very savages we have forced from their ancient homes, will turn back and regard us with contempt. Our children will open the map of 1860 and survey the boundaries of the old republic, then turn to the old constitution, and there read, this was once the country of their fathers, under whose wisdom the privileges and immunities of the citizens in the several states, were guaranteed to the citizens of each state, under the solemn bonds of perpetual union, and there will be no light in which they can regard this sad picture, that will not fill them with impatience and disgust. My countrymen, let us advance boldly to the work before us, gird ourselves about with the vigor of a chastened manhood, and halt not at any sacrifice demanded, or seemingly demanded, to meet this awful crisis. Look at our noble soldiers; see how they bare their breasts to the storm; how uncomplainingly they accept every requirement, and how fearlessly they meet them. “Three years, unless sooner discharged,” is written upon every heart, and borne upon every resolve. Thousands have gone down to the grave with this sublime mark of patriotism printed on their souls. Those who survive march on with steady step, surmounting one great trouble to encounter another, shoulder to shoulder advancing in line to the citadel of death, rather than violate that oath, or see their country perish.

This war has sufficiently revealed one cheering fact, which goes far toward relieving many of its dark shadows. The man who goes out with his character matured, returns with it unsullied. The young man, whose character is scarcely known to himself, goes to the war, shares its realities, mingles in its horrors, is tempted by its licentiousness, and benefited by its discipline; he has seen more of life, in one year, in the war, than he could have learned of it in ten at home; rapidly accumulates a maturity which would require years for development at home, and it is the experience of the whole country, that, if spared to return, with an honorable dis-



charge, he comes back a better man and a better citizen. With few exceptions, the deportment of our soldiers who have returned to mingle in society again, has been most creditable. Instead of attempting to repose upon their fairly earned laurels, or to spend a useless life of idleness and indolence, ninety out of every hundred are seen engaged in some busy employment, striving, in common with all good men, to inspire and support our government in its efforts to push the war on to a speedy and final close.

I desire to impress upon the defenders of our country, volunteers and drafted men alike, engaged in the same noble cause, the fact that the man who has faithfully served his country in this war, has much to be proud of and much to honor him. Such a man owes it to his reputation to guard it well, and see that no foolish blemish gathers upon it to ruin and destroy it. He is interested in cultivating the morals of the country and elevating the tone of society, because he becomes a member again of the community in which, when he returns, he fixes his home. The conduct of our soldiers in the field continues to deserve our highest praise. From the first hour of the war to the present moment our arms have been upheld upon almost every field and in almost every battle. The blood of Illinois is mingled with the blood of traitors on the mountain top, amid the hills, through the valleys and along the streams, as far as the mad waves of war overlap the once peaceful domain of our proud country. For prompt obedience, submission to the necessary discipline of war, skill in the performance of their duties, bold and daring courage in battle and humane treatment to the defeated foe, both officers and men continue to receive the highest encomiums of their commanders and deserve the lasting gratitude of every man, woman and child in the State and the nation. Illinois gives to our armies the best General of modern times.

Although the war is not over, it is rapidly approaching the end. However formidable the rebellion at first, we have seen the worst of it. We have measured its breadth, sounded its depth, and ascended to its height, and are bearing down upon and crushing it out. It required nearly two years of dearly bought experience to learn its magnitude and discover the true means to be employed in halting its progress. There was always a well founded belief, with a large portion of our people, that, to speedily and certainly break the back-bone of the rebellion, it would be necessary to strike directly at the institution of slavery. So long, however, had this

institution been fostered and protected by the indulgent sympathy of a vitiated public sentiment; so firmly were we convinced that, under our constitution, it had found some sort of foothold; and, above all, so careful were we of the rights of our southern brethren and their delicate sensibilities upon this peculiar institution, that, to some extent, we had educated ourselves not to look fairly and squarely at the question; and I firmly believe, had the rebels remained true to the Union, and respected, in their true dignity, the rights of the people of the United States, and not sought, in a forcible appeal to arms, to divide and destroy the nation and the constitution, ages would have passed by before the wisdom and justice of man would have reached and stricken from the roll of human errors this monstrous evil upon our country. They went to war to make slavery the corner-stone of a new confederacy, and to build upon this error, in the very face of God, a hideous despotism. To do this, it was first essential that the only well established and divinely favored Republic should be destroyed, and they actually began the war for this purpose. Nor is this monstrous truth to be hidden or denied by all the falsehood and pretense—the slander and misrepresentation—that fiction can invent or man concoct. The public sentiment of the whole north and north west was, to let slavery alone, in the slave States, forever; but it has forfeited whatever of real or imaginary protection it ever was entitled to, and an impatient and outraged people will put up with its pretensions no longer. By a joint resolution of Congress of March 2d, 1861, the following amendment was proposed to the Constitution of the United States: “No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State.” And the Legislature of this State, at the session of 1863, ratified said amendment. It is well known that this amendment was proposed to conciliate the south—to show to them our temper on the slavery question; and thus, by a timely exhibition of moderation and forbearance, on the part of the administration coming into power, allay all cause for strife, or the pretense for it, on this embarrassing question. It was soon manifest, however, that no antidote could heal the mad spirit of rebellion. The south had deliberately prepared for the crisis, and were bent on involving the country in ruin. No concession could head off the

furious purposes of these self-conceited and self-constituted usurpationists, who claimed, at last, the right to dictate who should and who should not be elected President of the United States. Another proposed amendment to the Constitution is now pending before Congress. It came near passing at the last session. There are some reasons for believing it may yet be passed by the present Congress. This amendment is very unlike the one above quoted, but, like the other, will, I hope, when it reaches our Legislature, receive its early sanction and approval. It is as follows :

*Resolved, etc.*, (two-thirds of both Houses concurring,) That the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of the several States, as an amendment of the constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three-fourths of said Legislatures, shall be valid to all intents and purposes, as a part of said constitution, namely :

#### ARTICLE XIII.

SECTION 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

SEC. 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

These different amendments, proposed at different periods during the progress of the rebellion, show the marked change the sentiment of the country has undergone on this question. Moral convictions sometimes rest upon the demonstrations of moral proof. In this instance, there is the additional weight of moral consciousness, based upon the aggravated sufferings of a whole nation for nearly four years, arising solely out of this great evil—nor will the public sentiment of the country be checked or delayed, in its determination to eradicate slavery from the soil of the republic by the constant inquiry, “What is to become of the negro after he is free?” It might better be asked, what may not become of him? He can labor. He can learn. He can fight, improve and aspire, and if after we shall have tried, for as long to make him a useful free man as we have a useless slave, we shall fail, and he shall fail, there will be time enough left in which to solve this persistent question. If there were no other or higher motive for emancipation, I would still fervently advocate it as a punishment to traitors for the crime of treason, for it is useless to talk about ending the

rebellion in any other way, than upon our own terms and conditions. If we cannot subdue them, to the extent of an unqualified cessation of hostilities against the National Government, and a positive return to obedience to the laws of the land, as they are honored and obeyed by every good citizen of the United States, we shall not have conquered them at all. The people of Illinois are not aiding in the prosecution of this war, with any view of at last, and when resistance to our laws is no longer possible, entering into any flimsy and deceptive compromise, to cajole ourselves and rebels into a fallacious and senseless settlement of the difficulties. They are in hostile rebellion against the National Government, savagely and without cause, waging a cruel and barbarous war on us, and should be made to feel the strong arm of that government. When they lay down their arms and cry for peace, as they took them up and shouted for war, it will be time enough to arrange for them the terms upon which they shall be permitted to participate in the government. I do not adhere to the distinction so generally made between leader and follower in the monstrous offence. Both are guilty. But as it may be impossible, in the administration of justice, to reach all, those most prominent in guilt should be made to suffer most. In theory, I know no distinction amongst them; every man in rebellion against the United States, is guilty of treason and deserves the punishment of death. Those who are not, and who have not been in rebellion, are not to be classed with them, in any event. They deserve and will receive the gratitude of the whole country in all time to come. Those who were forced to take up arms against their will, deserve and will receive our clemency.

However much, in times past, men may have differed about state sovereignty and state rights, it is certain that the rights and just powers of the National Government have fully appeared and been conceded by the citizens of the different States in this war. The constitution of the United States confers upon the general government all the powers necessary to guard and protect its sovereignty against a foreign or domestic enemy. It possesses, and can fully exercise, every power necessary to enforce obedience to its laws in every State in the Union. It invades the rights of no state in doing so. Every citizen of a state, is also a citizen of the United States. What is done by the National Government is done by the authority and for the benefit of every citizen in the states. It is as much under the control, and responds as readily to

the wishes of the citizens of the states as do the state governments. The citizens of Illinois are as directly represented in the national councils, as by this honorable body in our General Assembly. They vote directly for members of the house, who are accountable to them every two years—and indirectly for Senators, responsible every six years. The President, theoretically, is not, but in practice really is likewise elected by the voters of the different states.

How inexcusable, then, is that folly, which, by persistent appeals to the people of the States, seeks, by misrepresentation and false argument, to create a hostility to the general government, when the truth is, the people constitute that very government. Of course Illinois, like any other state in the Union, is sovereign over all those powers not delegated to the National Government. But Illinois cannot declare war, nor make treaties with foreign governments, nor enter into any alliance or confederation with them, or with the states of this Union—not even coin money, or emit bills of credit—neither can any other state of the Union do so. All are prohibited, and wisely so, from the exercise of these sovereign rights, and a multitude of others which might be enumerated; so that no state, of its own wish, can bring ruin and destruction upon our rights, as a free people, by making treaties or alliances with any government, prince or state upon earth. Nor can any state, at its pleasure, withdraw from the obligations of the voluntary concession of sovereignty to the National Government. Ample means are provided for amending and changing the constitution of the United States, and by the faithful exercise of these rights, we can, at pleasure, modify and alter our form of government to suit the wishes of our people. If it had ever been contemplated that any dissatisfied state could, of its own volition, upon the suggestion of its own weak counsels, withdraw from the Union at pleasure, then, manifestly, there could have been no wisdom in the attempt to create the Union. The concessions of sovereignty to the National Government were to prohibit the exercise of them by any state; but if a state could, by simply declaring its withdrawal from the Union, resume, at pleasure, these sovereign rights, is it not manifest that the Union was framed in vain, and never had any strength or virtue in it. And yet, the disregard of these simple and solemn obligations by every state in rebeldom, to day, is sustained and vindicated by many, openly, upon the alarming assumption that they had the right to do so. The assumption is false, the reasoning



is false, the conclusion is false. The whole theory involves disruption, desolation and destruction, and is utterly false—put forth to poison the public mind and undermine the nation. Illinois has written upon her broad seal the words “State Sovereignty,” “National Union,” and by her fidelity to the Union, and her sacrifices in this war, declared that she accepts that interpretation, which makes her loyal and faithful to both.

And now, gentlemen, by the diligent application of our best abilities, let us earnestly enter upon, and, as far as we can, execute the great task reposed in our hands, by the noble state whose future, to some extent, rests in our keeping; and, to the support of these purposes, we will appeal to that Supreme Being who rules the destinies of all nations and states.

RICHARD J. OGLESBY.









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